March 2015



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Washington State FSA Newsletter

State Farm Service Agency

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USDA Extends Deadline to Update Yields and Revise Bases

The USDA made a one-time extension to an important Farm Bill safety-net program deadline. The final day to update yield history or reallocate base acres for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs is **March 31, 2015.** If no changes are made to yield history or base acres by March 31, 2015, the farm's current yield and base will be used.

A program choice of ARC or PLC coverage also must be made by March 31, 2015, or there will be no 2014 payments for the farm and the farm will default to PLC coverage through the 2018 crop year.

Contact your <u>local FSA office</u> for more information

or to make an appointment.

Administration Rod Hamilton, Programs Mike Mykines, Loans

Please contact <u>your local</u> <u>FSA office</u> for questions specific to your operation or county.

CRP Maintenance

Spring weather brings out the weeds. If you are a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract holder, you are required to control weeds on your CRP ground. However, certain restrictions apply during the primary nesting season.

The primary nesting season for Washington is April 1 through July 1. During this time period, prior approval by the County Committee is required to treat weeds by mowing, burning, or spraying on contracts that have received final stand certification. Treatment must be limited to areas that have weed problems. Treatment of entire fields for cosmetic purposes is not allowed.

Outside the nesting period, you are allowed to perform treatment without any prior approval from FSA.

Activities such as harrowing or chopping of dried mustards and Russian thistle after the nesting period has ended can be a valuable tool to keep these weeds from getting on your neighbor's property. They also help maintain grass vigor and ensure that you have a viable cover for the entire CRP contract period. Fifty percent cost-sharing may be available under certain circumstances, if these activities are approved by FSA before work begins.

Remember that these rules only apply to contracts where the cover has been determined to be established. If your stand has not been determined to be established, you may, and are contractually required to, perform any weed control activities necessary, at any time of the year as called for in your conservation plan. Failure of your stand due to lack of weed control may lead to payment reductions or contract termination.

Contact your <u>local FSA office</u> for more information.

Specialty Crop Coverage Improves - March Deadline for Certain Crops

If you produce a specialty crop that is ineligible for crop insurance. FSA has an improved program

that can help protect against losses from weather and natural disasters.

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or NAP, offers much more than in the past. Previously you were covered at 55 percent of the average market price for losses exceeding 50 percent, but now you can cover 65 percent of your crop at 100 percent of the price.

For new, low-income or previously underserved farmers, there is free basic coverage, and higher coverage at discounted premiums.

The deadline to purchase 2015 crop year NAP coverage for beet seed or fresh, buckwheat, camelina, carrots fresh or processing, mustard, radish for seed or fresh, small grain forages (wheat, barley, oats, peas), and other spring planted crops **is March 16, 2015**. If you grow other specialty crops check the web at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or call your local FSA county office.

The Farm Service Agency Seeks Applicants

Hiring continues for positions throughout the state with the Farm Service Agency. The agency particularly looks for candidates who have agricultural backgrounds and are passionate about serving farmers and ranchers. As vacancies arise, they are posted on the <u>USAJobs</u> website. If you would like your name added to a list to receive vacancy updates, contact HR Specialist Mitzi Stephens at <u>mitzi.stephens@wa.usda.gov</u>.

FSA Guaranteed Loans Expand Options for Lenders and Farmers

When crop or livestock prices drop, financing your operation can become challenging. Through the Guaranteed Farm Loan Program, the Farm Service Agency partners with local lenders to increase financing options. An FSA guarantee allows lenders to do some things that they might not consider, such as longer term loans and refinancing of some debt along with lines of credit.

Under a guaranteed loan, a commercial lender makes and services the loan, and FSA guarantees it against loss up to a maximum of 90 percent in most cases. In certain limited circumstances, a 95 percent guarantee is available. FSA has the responsibility of approving all eligible loan guarantees and providing oversight of lenders' activities. To learn more about FSA guaranteed loans or FSA approved lenders for the loan guarantees, contact your Local FSA office.

NRCS Offers Free Conservation Plans

Technical assistance is available for agriculture producers who want to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop a voluntary conservation plan. These are FREE plans that identify potential natural resource problems, evaluate alternatives, and recommend solutions that could make use of the land more effective and sustainable. The deadline to apply for this free technical assistance is March 20, 2015. Contact your <u>local NRCS office</u> for details.

Important Dates and Deadlines

- March 16, 2015 Deadline to purchase 2015 crop year Non-insured Crop Disaster
 Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for beet seed or fresh, buckwheat, camelina, carrots
 fresh or processing, mustard, radish for seed or fresh, small grain forages (wheat, barley,
 oats, peas), and other spring planted crops.
- March 31, 2015 New deadline to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- March 31, 2015 Deadline to make a one-time election between ARC and PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- March 31, 2015 Deadline to request a commodity marketing assistance loan (MAL) or loan deficiency payment (LDP) for harvested crops of barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed, wheat, or sesame seed crop.
- Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015 Sign ARC and PLC contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- June 1, 2015 Deadline to request a commodity marketing assistance loan (MAL) or loan
 deficiency payment (LDP) for 2014 harvested crops of corn, dry peas, grain sorghum,
 lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower seeds.

Crop Acreage Reporting Dates for 2015 Crop Year

- 12/15/14 Fall Seeded Crops
- 1/15/15 Perennial Fruit, Berry and Grapes
- 7/15/15 Spring Seeded Crops, CRP

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